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ABSTRACT

America's keen interest in education has derived partly from the practical need for educated manpower, partly from a faith in education as the foundation of a workable democratic society, and partly from the belief that every person should have the chance, and even the obligation, for personal fulfillment through learning. The history of American education is based on the principle that colleges and universities should be readily accessible to successive waves of new students on easy and inviting terms. Despite all this educational effort, our society today seems to be floundering. Today the nation is engaged in a great debate about the future of higher education, especially about the wisdom of expanding it still further to serve new classes of students. The question is whether the historic development of higher education should be resumed. In trying to reach conclusions about the future national policy for higher education, the document first considers the questions: Just what is higher education now contributing to American society and are the results worth what they cost? The document also discusses economic outcomes, outcomes as changes in society derived from changes in individuals, outcomes as changes in society derived directly from higher education, and higher education and the enrichment of lives. (Author/KE)

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"HIGHER EDUCATION AND AMERICA'S DISCONTENTS"

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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My talk this morning is based on the assumption that members of the AAUW have an abiding interest in higher education, and that they are also deeply concerned about the major problems and discontents that plague American life today. I am therefore hoping to connect these two interests by considering the relationship between higher education and the social discontents of our time.

America has had a love affair with education. This keen interest has derived partly from the practical need for educated manpower, partly from a faith in education as the foundation of a workable democratic society, and partly from the belief that every person should have the chance, and even the obligation, for personal fulfillment through learning.

The effort to expand learning meant at first the overcoming of illiteracy through the spread of free public elementary schools; later, it meant the provision of public secondary education to virtually all our people; eventually, it meant the wide diffusion of higher education. The growth of higher education occurred at first through the founding of hundreds of private colleges and state universities as the frontier moved westward. Later came the land grant movement, the founding of scores of normal schools later to be converted into state colleges and universities, the extension movement which has recently taken on new life as non-traditional study, the community college movement, the G.I. Bill, the recent federal grants to institutions for a multitude of purposes, and finally massive federal aid to students.

This history has been based on the principle that colleges and universities should be readily accessible to successive waves of new students on easy and inviting terms. Supply has been made available, not just in response to demand, but in anticipation of demand. And demand has responded time and time again.

The product of all this effort is today nearly 3,000 colleges and universities of widely diverse types. These institutions are serving over 10 million students (of whom 6 1/2 million are full-time). The cost for all this is more

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than $30 billions a year (or $60 billions if one counts the forgone income of the students, as one should). The average level of formal education in the United States surpasses that of virtually all other countries.

Social Discontents

Despite all this educational effort, our society today seems to be floundering. It is unsure of its values and goals and lacks confidence in its institutions and its leaders. Further, it is beset with grave and perplexing problems, most of them due to human error, human folly, or human neglect. Even to mention these problems is almost embarrassing because we all know they could have been avoided by resort to our elemental values, our basic common sense, and our technical know-how. Among these problems are: racial injustice, inequality between the sexes, wastage of natural resources, pollution of the environment, urban decay, preventable illness, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and delinquency, unemployment, inflation, and poverty. And one can add to all these the worst problem of all, the scourge of war.

We are uncertain and divided about how to deal with these problems. We are often stalemated by conflict among interest groups. The result is a kind of social paralysis.

In describing our present discontents it is hard to believe that we are talking about the same nation that in the past 30 years triumphed over Hitler, launched the Marshall Plan, restored democracy to Japan, overcame polio, invented the computer, harnessed nuclear energy, landed on the moon, and doubled its real GNP every 20 years. Incidentally, most of these triumphs could not have been achieved without a well-developed higher education.

The discontents I have just mentioned seemed to have reached a new intensity almost precisely after the recent great upsurge in enrollments and expenditures for higher education. This sequence of events raises some profound questions. Has our traditional faith in education been misplaced? Has the great expansion of higher education, so hopefully entered into, not only offered no solution but even intensified the problems?

The Issue

Today the nation is engaged in a great debate about the future of higher education, especially about the wisdom of expanding it still further to serve new classes of students.

At each stage in the past development of higher education, there have been those who have believed that the three Rs would be enough, or who have argued that only an elite minority of our people would be educable beyond a

few years of school, or who have held that there would not be enough jobs for educated people, or who have asserted that the nation could not "afford" additional education. But the majority has stood firm in its faith, and the widening and deepening of education has been steadfastly pursued. And many have continued to believe that the end of the road would be reached only when every person could be educated up to his full capacity as a unique human being.

Today, as in the past, there are many who think education has been overdone. Yet, it is quite clear that we are only part way toward the long-held ideal of education for every person up to the utmost of his potentialities.

Let me illustrate how far we fall short of this goal by citing some statistics on participation rates in higher education today. For example, the number of women attending is about a million fewer than the number of men. The relative number of low-income persons attending is far below that of high-income persons. It is 15 percent for those in the $0-3,000 income class and 59 percent for those over a modest $15,000. There are also surprisingly wide variations among the states in college attendance. To mention the extremes, in one state, college attendance is 24 percent of the 18 to 24-year old population; in another it is 59 percent.

If women were to attend at the same rate as men, if low-income people could attend at the same rate as middle and high-income people, if attendance rates were as high throughout the country as in the leading states, enrollment would be increased by at least 6 or 7 millions. And if persons beyond the usual college age began attending in rapidly growing numbers, as they show signs of doing, enrollments would grow even more. A doubling of college attendance before the end of the century is not beyond possibility -- if the nation offered suitable opportunities and incentives and offered learning programs relevant to the needs of new clienteles.

Moreover, the mere extension of higher education to more people is not the only possibility. We could deepen education as well as widen it. Indeed, the ignorance that is abroad in our land suggests that the process of education has only begun.

The question we face, then, is whether the historic development of higher education should be resumed. But before we try to reach conclusions about future national policy for higher education, let us consider the questions: Just what is higher education now contributing to American society? Are the results worth what they cost? These questions are being asked not only by the general public,

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legislators, donors, and parents but also by students and even educators themselves. The demand is for evidence not commencement rhetoric. The burden of proof is on the educators. The fashionable word is accountability.

I am devoting much of my time to a study of the outcomes of American higher education. I am trying to assemble and to appraise existing information on the subject. As everyone knows, the outcomes of higher education are diverse, intangible, and extraordinarily hard to measure. Education is inescapably an act of faith. Sound appraisal of results must in the end rest largely upon intuitive judgment. Yet, a considerable body of knowledge has been gathered and should be part of the evaluative process. I shall try to summarize what I understand to be the present state of knowledge about the outcomes of higher education. Then I shall return to the question of whether higher education is worth what it costs and whether it should be expanded further. I shall begin with the economic returns to investments in higher education. In doing so, I am not implying that the economic returns are the most important outcomes.

Economic Outcomes

Dr. Edward F. Denison of the Brookings Institution, in his authoritative studies on economic growth in the United States, reports that about a fourth (26.4 percent) of the growth in GNP per worker over the 40 years from 1929 to 1969 was attributable to education. From this, one can infer that today about $130 billions a year of our current annual GNP is due to education. Denison's results, however, relate to education at all levels and he provides no information on higher education separately. If one were to guess that one-third of the total were due to higher education, the amount would be about $40 to $45 billions which is somewhat greater than the present annual cost of operating all our colleges and universities, but far above those costs of operation when the education which generated the growth took place.

Dr. Denison's general conclusions on the relation of education to general economic growth are confirmed by the many studies of economists on the relationship between investments in the education of individuals and their future income. Investments in higher education are defined to include both the costs of operating colleges and universities and the income sacrificed by students by reason of their being in college. The average investment for each student is of the order of $25,000 over four years. Most of these studies have concluded that investments in higher education yield returns of 10 percent or more a year, and that these returns compare favorably with investments in factories, airlines, or supermarkets.

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However, for several reasons, these studies must be interpreted with some caution. One reason is that the results may be due in part to the sorting of people in the labor market rather than to education proper. That is to say, employers may use college credentials in such a way that the college educated receive a preference over non-college people for high-paying jobs even though they may not be better qualified.

In a recent careful study of the returns to investment in higher education by Taubman and [illegible]es, the authors conclude that rate of return is 7 1/2 to 9 percent. But they also conclude that up to half of this return is due to the role of education in sorting people for the labor market rather than to instruction. Thus, the net rate of return to instruction is estimated at around 4 or 5 percent which is clearly below the market rate for investments in physical capital.

The economic returns to higher education include not only instruction but also research and public service. The nation looks to higher education for most of its basic (as distinct from applied) research and also depends heavily on certain public services, notably agricultural extension and various health services. Dr. Denison has estimated that advances in knowledge contributed 53 percent of the growth in productivity per worker over the period 1929-1969 -- about twice the amount of growth derived from instruction. By no means was all this 53 percent attributable to higher education. Much of it was due to research and development in industry and government. But there can be no doubt that higher education was a significant element.

My conclusion from the sketchy statistical evidence is that higher education (including both its instructional and research functions) has in the past had a significant and positive role in the economic development of the nation and that it has probably more than paid for itself in economic growth--provided one values economic growth. Yet I do not claim that American higher education has wrought miracles. One cannot overlook the fact that other nations with far less higher education than the United States have also made great economic strides. Moreover, I am by no means sure that future expansion of higher education would have comparable effects on growth. Education is not exempt from the law of diminishing returns. In recent years, the labor market for college graduates has perceptibly softened and there is some evidence that the spread between the earning of college graduates and high school graduates may be narrowing. Indeed, as the number of persons with higher education steadily increases relative to the number with less education, one would expect the

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earnings of the more educated to fall and of the less educated to rise. It should be no surprise that truck drivers and coal miners are being paid more than teachers or junior bank officers, or that people with college education are finding their way into blue-collar work. In fact, there is an old saying that education raises the incomes of the uneducated; and the obverse is that it lowers the relative incomes of the educated. Moreover, this result is exactly what a society that proclaims egalitarian values should hope for.

Outcomes as Changes in Individuals

Let me turn now to a consideration of the outcomes of higher education other than economic growth. The first of these is change in individual personalities. Basically, the purpose of higher education is to change people in desirable ways. These changes may have profound effects on the economy and the society, but in the first instance the objective is to modify the human traits.

Psychologists and sociologists have produced a vast literature on individual outcomes. Specifically, when they compare graduating seniors with entering freshmen, they find a general freeing of the personality, an increased openness to the new, a willingness to search and experiment, and a breaking away from convention and tradition. In matters of morals, students become more tolerant, flexible, and relativistic. With respect to religion they become less attached to orthodoxy and fundamentalism, less interested in the church, and more exploratory. As to aesthetics, they become more interested, aware, and sensitive. In politics, they become more liberal. Regarding work, their vocational orientation decreases, their interest in general education increases, and their desire for self-expression from work increases -- as compared with their interest in rewards such as income and security. Their vocational aspirations often change and become more definite. Self-awareness and self-identity are increased. Emotional and psychological stability increases. Seniors are less likely to be alienated than freshmen. Masculinity traits decrease for men and increase for women, and thus sex differentation is reduced. During college, students become more independent and mature. Seniors are more dominant, self-sufficient, assertive, and autonomous than freshmen. They are more ready to express impulses, more spontaneous, less self-controlled and less restrained, less tidy, less punctual, and less socially responsible. They have a higher need for flexibility, change, and less need for active and intense emotional expression and self-indulgence. They are less sociable, less gregarious, more socially introverted, more aggressive. In intellectuality, seniors have made gains in intellectual skills and aptitudes, in ability to think critically, and in factual knowledge.

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Seniors have more self-confidence, self-understanding, and poise than freshmen. Seniors are more venturesome, resourceful, organized, motivated, fully involved, and persistent. They are more open to experience, more willing to confront questions and problems, more ready to initiate things, and to disagree.

The outcomes identified by psychologists and sociologists seem mostly to be commendable, and generally the changes are found to persist to a greater or lesser degree through adult life. There are many problems, however, in interpreting these results. One of the more awkward ambiguities is that some of the outcomes may be negative and that people may disagree about the desirability of some of them. For example, college influences may lead to the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, or to questionable sex behavior. It may impair conventional patriotism. College may lead to alienation from family, to breaking away from traditional religion, to relativistic moral standards. It may produce radical social and political views or breakdown of conventional attitudes toward work and thrift.

Another way of estimating the impact of college on individuals is to measure differences in attitudes and behavior between adult college-educated people and others. For example, with reference to family life, some studies show that college-going delays the time of marriage, it affects the choice of marriage partner, it reduces family size, it favors the careful rearing and education of children, it changes the allocation of time in the household for both men and women, it raises the efficiency of consumer choice, and it improves the management of personal affairs.

College-going also seems to affect work and leisure. College-educated men and women have higher rates of participation in the labor force, they retire later, they experience less unemployment, they have longer job tenure and less job turnover, they have greater geographic mobility, they are able to benefit more from work experience, and they use leisure differently than do the non-college educated.

In their planning for the future, the college educated appear to save relatively more and for different purposes, to be willing to assume greater financial risk, to have a longer planning horizon and awareness of the future, and to invest their money more efficiently than non-college people.

In political affairs, the college-educated are more likely to vote and to participate more actively in civic organizations and activities, and to be involved less in illegal activities than the non-educated. Finally, the

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college educated are healthier and they appear to obtain more enjoyment, interest, and challenge from life.

What conclusions can one draw from the socio-psychological studies on the direct influence of college on the traits and behavior patterns of individuals? In view of the fragmentary character of available information and the ambiguities in its interpretation, one's conclusion must be cautious. In my judgment, an impartial reading of the studies suggests that on balance the impact of college is significant and favorable. But how significant and how favorable is hard to say.

Outcomes as Changes in Society Derived from Changes in Individuals

As increasing numbers of the population are changed through education and find their way into society, they would be expected to produce a general leavening effect on society as a whole. For example, the general level of cultivation and taste might be raised; family planning might be encouraged; child care and the home training of children might be improved; the quality of schools might be raised; appreciation of the arts and learning might be deepened; the quality of health services and health practices might be raised; participation in and understanding of political, civic, religious, and cultural organizations and activities might be increased; willingness to seek and to accept social change might be enhanced; the values underlying community and political decisions might become more humane; and a sense of common culture and social solidarity might be enhanced.

These are the things educators hope will happen. Yet I know of no hard evidence to confirm whether they do or do not. The actual realization of the leavening effect will presumably depend partly on the numbers of college-educated people who are introduced into the community, the more the greater the influence. It will depend also on the character of the higher education. If the higher education produces materialistic, arrogant, and status-conscious people who set themselves apart from the larger community, and who have little sense of social responsibility, then higher education will not produce desirable social results. On the other hand, to the extent that higher education is rooted in humane values and in the concepts of social service and social responsibility, it probably can produce significant and beneficial social change. I suspect that the actual system of higher education lies between the polar extremes of narrow materialism and humane social responsibility, and that overall it exerts at least a modestly favorable influence on society. But this is an opinion and not a fact.

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Outcomes as Changes in Society Derived Directly from Higher Education

I turn now to direct influences of higher education on society. These derive mainly from its role as a principal center of research, scholarship, philosophical and religious inquiry, artistic creativity and criticism, social criticism, and public policy studies. Colleges and universities are the major institutions of our society for preserving the cultural heritage, discovering values and meanings in it, interpreting it to the present, and distilling wisdom out of it. And they are at the same time a major source in our society of new knowledge, new ideas, and new values. It is the faculties of colleges and universities who perform the functions of repositories of knowledge and ideas from the past and sources of new ideas for the present and future. They propogate these ideas through their students, through their publications some of which are scholarly and some popular, through their work as lecturers, through their serving as consultants to government and business, and through their taking temporary employment in government, business, and journalism. Moreover, the faculties provide a great and flexible pool of specialized talent which is available to society for consultation on social problems as they arise. Whenever the society is faced with novel problems, whether of national or local scope, it often turns to the obvious and most visible institution -- the university. When facing new problems such as poverty, inflation, health insurance, or space exploration, society looks to the academic community not only for information and advice but also in many cases for actual execution and administration of programs. Universities and colleges dispatch foreign technical missions, administer governmental laboratories, dispense technical services and training for private corporations and farmers, and provide a host of consulting services to government and industry. Some of this work is conducted officially under the auspices of the institutions and some by professors in their "spare time." Indeed a new breed of professors has emerged who move easily between the academic world and business or government. Such professors are called upon to man the cabinet, they are elected to public office, they become members of special commissions, they are sent on foreign missions, they are consulted on many kinds of political, technical, and diplomatic issues by government at all levels and by private business. Indeed, a major issue is whether the academy has not become so involved in practical affairs and so aligned with various interest groups as to call its objectivity into question.

The social influence of the academic community is not merely at the technical level. It is also exerted in the realm of values, for example, through the analysis of values, through criticism, through the construction of

philosophical systems and ideologies; and through the appraisal of existing social institutions. Generally, the weight of academic influence, at least in recent decades, has been exerted toward humane as distinct from economic values; international understanding; egalitarianism including racial justice, equality between the sexes, and more equitable distribution of opportunity and income; conservation of natural resources; protection of the environment; and the autonomy and freedom of individuals.

As I have indicated, the influence of colleges and universities upon society has been exerted both indirectly through changes in the perspectives, values, and attitudes of its students, and directly through ongoing activities as centers of learning. This influence has been growing steadily for many decades.

Higher education has of course not been the only factor in social change. The farm movement, the labor movement, the political parties, the church, and above all the turbulent events of the past century have had their effects. Yet the colleges and universities have -- perhaps unwittingly -- made increasing numbers of students and other people aware of the ambiguities, injustices, and malfunctioning of unbridled capitalism. In particular they have pointed to the need for cultural development transcending the single goal of economic growth. And the faculties have engaged increasingly in studies relevant to the understanding and reform of American society, studies that have included both the search for positive knowledge and the consideration of basic values and practical policies.

These developments reached a dramatic climax in the 1960s when the colleges and universities -- through their students and a large minority of faculty -- became one of the major political forces of the nation. This remarkable episode was the work not of the institutions as official entities but of large minorities of students and faculty. At the time, the doctrines and the tactics of some of these people were to say the least bizarre and unseemly. Yet as one reflects on this era, the students and faculty involved were trying to express the basic ideals and values of the academic community and were pointing out the inconsistencies between these values and the realities of American life.

As John D. Rockefeller, 3rd says in his remarkable little book, The Second American Revolution the youth of that period "affected a presidential election, changed universities in important ways, raised the visibility of the environment and population growth as major problem areas, provided the main impetus to the powerful antiwar sentiment, encouraged a more open and positive attitude toward sex, led the way in experimentation toward new social forms, sparked the

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eighteen-year-old vote; provided the backbone for communism and public interest pressure groups; developed and carried forward a whole set of 'new values'; and acted generally as a goad and conscience to all of us in reflecting on our personal values and those we hold for our society." Mr. Rockefeller adds: "I see the central meaning to be a desire to achieve a person-centered society, instead of one built around materialism and large impersonal institutions which breed conformity rather than individuality and creativity. It embodies a vision of a society in which each person would have a genuine opportunity for self-liberation and fulfillment, a society in which the Judeo-Christian ideals of love, trust, and human dignity, and the American ideals of equality, freedom, and individual rights, would become truly operative and meaningful for all people." These values were a direct product of higher education, and the campus events of the 1960s were primarily an effort to apply the values emerging from the academy to the practical problems of the time.

The student movement of the 1960s has become quiescent but could be repeated in the future. The values it represents are still present on our campuses and in other settings among millions of people. They are the values that will have to prevail in the future not only in our nation but throughout the world if human life on this planet is to survive. It is clear that a society can no longer live by the gospel of economic growth.

It is sometimes believed that the many social problems plaguing us today are new. This is not so. They have all been with the nation for a long time. Among the environmental problems, concern for overpopulation goes back to the time of Malthus; the wanton wastage of natural resources has been a major characteristic of American society from the beginning; the pollution of air, water, and the visual environment have been known for centuries (all our older cities were black with coal soot and dust); urban decay has always been with us in the unbelievably squalid slums and unsightly industries of almost all our cities. Among the problems of human relations, racial injustice pricked the consciences of our ancestors over a century ago and a Civil War was fought over it; the concern for inequality between the sexes goes back at least to the time of the suffragettes. Problems of health, crime and delinquency, drug abuse, and general sladness of taste and refinement are not new. And the economic problems of unemployment, inflation, and inequality of income have been with us intermittently since the founding of the nation.

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The problems themselves are old and familiar. Most are in fact less acute than they were several generations ago because, despite impressions to the contrary, great progress has been made in social legislation and in the generally humane outlook of American society. The significant difference is that our values have changed and our sensitivity to these problems has increased. In particular, we are awakening to the probability that economic growth is neither worthy nor possible as the primary goal of a society, and that in the future primacy must go to goals relating to equity among persons, freedom, cultivation of the inner human personality, and meaningful human relationships. In my judgment, education has had much to do with this change.

In discussing the effect of higher education on social change, I have stressed the role of colleges and universities as a source of new ideas, values, and ideologies. Higher education also has the potential, realized only in part today, to discover talent which might otherwise be unknown or wasted, to encourage an open class structure and a fluid society, and to reduce inequalities in the distribution of income. Regarding income distribution, it would be surprising if the further spread of higher education did not lower the compensation of the college educated, raise the earnings of the non-college educated, and thus narrow the income gap between upper and lower income groups.

Higher Education and the Enrichment of Lives

Finally, in my list of outcomes, I shall mention the direct benefits in the form of enriched lives.

The experience of attending college is for most students rewarding and enjoyable in and of itself without ulterior benefits. This outcome should not be underrated.

A college education also opens up to many people new interests, new awareness, and new understandings which are an important source of enjoyment and satisfactions throughout their lives.

Families, including parents and spouses and other relatives of students, often receive vicarious satisfactions from the opportunities afforded by college. Parents, moreover, may be relieved to be able to shift some of the responsibility for guiding and developing their children to an institution.

Still another direct benefit of higher education, accruing to society in general, is public entertainment in the form of musical and dramatic performances, art exhibits, broadcasting, spectator sports, etc., much of it highly subsidized.

Conclusions

I have suggested that higher education yields several types of outcomes. It contributes to economic productivity, it changes individual personalities in ways that are on the whole desirable. Through these changes in individuals it may have beneficial effects on society, through its studies and the dissemination of its findings it may initiate social change, it may reduce inequalities among persons, and finally it enriches lives in and of itself. I would not argue that any one of these outcomes -- even including economic growth -- has been definitely proved to exist. And I would not venture to put a dollar sign on any one of them. I do think that each is plausible and even probable, that each is on balance valuable, and that all taken together would add up in benefits to much more than the cost. But even after reviewing existing knowledge of outcomes, I cannot document this conclusion, and it must be classed as an opinion or at most a considered judgment. If this general opinion is correct, the question posed at the beginning of this paper must be repeated: If higher education produces favorable results, why is the nation in such a parlous state just at the time when American higher education has reached a high point in enrollment and resources employed?

One answer to this question is of course that higher education -- for all its influence -- cannot be held responsible for all the ills of the world. For all its benefits, it lacks the power to create a perfect society in an imperfect world.

A second answer is that higher education may have sharpened our sensitivity to the problems of war and peace, racial injustice, the environment, and the like. These problems are widely recognized and with a new sense of urgency. Moreover, possibly due to higher education, the humane values of individuality, freedom, equality, human dignity, and general quality of life are more influential than at any time in living memory. Also the base of knowledge necessary to solve these problems has been or can be created. Higher education has has an important -- perhaps decisive -- role in bringing about all of these changes. Indeed, the discontents of our time arise not so much from a deterioration of objective conditions as from a rise in the values and standards we use to judge these conditions.

My review of the outcomes suggests -- to me at least -- that the historic expansion of higher education in this country should not be closed off but that

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it should continue. There are benefits and rewards still to be reaped through the widening of higher education to include more people and the deepening of higher education for those already included. The purpose of such a policy, however, would not be the promotion of further economic growth. The purpose would be the enrichment of human lives and the raising of our sensitivities and through that the building of a new kind of civilization. In these terms, let us consider a possible future for higher education in the United States.

First, the regular work of the world would still need to be done. People would need to be trained for a wide range of ordinary jobs. In addition, great cadres of scientists, engineers, physicians, and other health workers, social scientists, teachers, social workers, humanists, and other vocationally-trained persons would be needed to help find ways to conserve resources, clean up the environment, restore our cities, overcome poverty, improve health, achieve economic stability, etc. There would be no shortage of work to be done if we would dedicate ourselves to solving America's problems and building a better -- not necessarily more opulent -- life. Indeed, we would clearly be short of the trained manpower needed to achieve our goals -- if these goals were stated in terms of the requirements of a good life rather than in terms of market demand for ordinary goods. Moreover, if the people were prepared for and dedicated to the jobs that would make America better, not just richer, the likelihood of appropriate political decisions would be increased. These political decisions would undoubtedly call for expansion of social programs and not merely conventional economic growth.

Second, higher education would provide ready opportunities and strong encouragement to our entire population to achieve education up to the full extent of their capacities. This would be done on the premise that learning is essential both to personal fulfillment of individuals and to development of the culture. The overriding purpose of higher education would change from that of preparing people to fill particular slots in the economy to that of building a great civilization that is compatible with the environment and with the nature of man. Liberal education would become the dominant style. Higher education would still be involved in vocational preparation, but its main purpose would far transcend traditional economic goals. Its purpose would be to maximize human life, not the GNP. As Ruskin said in Unto this Last, a book which I regard as one of the greatest books on economics ever written, "I believe nearly all labour may be shortly divided into positive and negative labour: positive, that which produces life; negative,

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that which produces death... the prosperity of any nation is in exact proportion to the quantity of labour which it spends in obtaining and employing the means of life... Production does not consist in things laboriously made, but in things serviceably consumable; and the question for the nation is not how much labour it employs but how much life it produces. For as consumption is the end and aim of production, so life is the end and aim of consumption. There is no wealth but life."

Third, the research, scholarly, and other intellectual activities of higher education would be intensified -- not cut back as is so often suggested. In these activities, higher education would emphasize the advancement of basic knowledge and the arts, the investigation and analysis of values, and social criticism. And it would intensify its efforts to apply its knowledge and criticism toward solution of the nagging problems which continue to vex our society.

The conception of higher education I am suggesting would call not only for continuing growth but also for substantial changes in orientation of the American system of higher education. The goal of highest priority would be the widening and deepening of education to the end that every person receives not only the opportunity but also the encouragement, even the obligation, to develop himself as a unique human being to the full extent of his powers. This does not mean that everyone would graduate from college at age 21, but rather each person would be given the genuine opportunity and encouragement to develop himself during his entire lifetime. To this end, the educational system would adjust and diversify its programs so that it could accommodate persons of widely varying backgrounds, interests, talents, and ages. Such education would provide an array of programs suited to all conditions of people. These programs would be available in convenient times and places, they would be supplied at low cost to students and would allow for appropriate financial aid and released time from work. Higher education would be recurrent and would serve adults of all ages from 18 years to 100. It would serve blue-collar workers as well as the conventional middle and upper class clientele. It would provide open admissions and would be flexible in admissions requirements and in prerequisites. It would recognize learning from all sources, and it would include both degree and non-degree programs. It would meet vocational as well as personal needs, but its underlying emphasis would be on liberal learning with stress on knowledge in the sciences and arts, humane values, and communication. It would expect to draw millions of disadvantaged persons into the mainstream of American society, not perhaps in a single

(more)

generation but over several generations.

At present, the higher educational system is not ready for this challenge. It has not achieved the flexibility needed and it has not learned to serve diverse clienteles. The higher educational system is designed basically for a minority of our people, call it an elite minority if you wish, and it is only groping toward meeting the challenge of the future. The basic planning job is to modify our system of higher education so that it can continue to accommodate traditional students, and at the same time reach out to the new students of all ages whose educational needs, at least during a transitional phase, are different. This does not mean that the system as a whole must learn to provide places for students of many backgrounds, interests, and ages. The task is to modify the system, partly by changing some existing institutions and partly by creating new ones.

There is much evidence that the nation is catching the vision of "the learning society." Millions of "new students" are finding their way to higher education. There are two questions: Can the higher educational system adjust to meet the challenge: and Will society provide the financial support? I believe the answer to both questions is in the affirmative, and I look for a resumption of the historic development of higher education in this country.

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